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Mr. COLLINS'S

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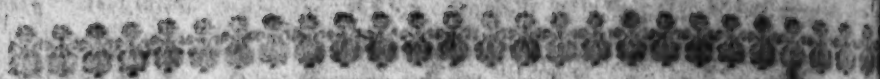
Holden at

R O C H E S T E R in Kent,

March the 13th. 1714.



Price Four-pence.



MR. COLLETT'S

FERMON

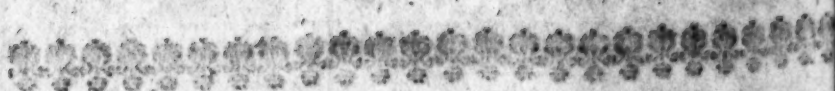


LENT

Holden at

ROCHESTER in Kent,

March the 13th. 1714.



Price Four-pence.

The Paths that lead to Peace.

A
SERMON
Preach'd at the
LENT-Affizes

Holden at
ROCHESTER in Kent,
Before the Right Honourable the
Lord Chief Justice PARKER,
AND THE
Honourable Mr. Justice TRACY,
March the 13th. 1714.

By RICHARD COLLINS, Rector of *Crayford.*

*Publish'd at the Request of the Gentlemen of the
Grand Inquest.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. PEMBERTON, at the *Buck and Sun,*
over-against *St. Dunstan's Church, in Fleetstreet.*
M DCC XV.

The Paper that lead to Peace.

A
SERMON

Preach'd at the

LENT-Affizes

Held at

ROCHESTER in Kent.

Before the Right Honourable the

Lord Chief Justice PARKER.



Honourable Mr. Justice TRACY.

March the 18th. 1714.

By RICHARD COLLINS, Rector of Crayford.

Printed at the Request of the Gentlemen of the
Grand Inquest.

L O N D O N.

Printed for J. BENTLEY at the Black and Swan
over against St. Dunstons Church in Fleetstreet.
M D C C X V.

David Polhill, Esq;

HIGH-SHERIFF

OF THE

County of KENT.

SIR,



*Without disobliging many
of the chief Gentlemen of
the County, I could have
pursued my own Reasons;*

*this Discourse had shared the Fate of
its Author in an obscure Concealment.*

*But since it must be printed, You know
whom every thing of mine belongs;*

*As a Clergyman, I cannot better re-
commend*

DEDICATION.

commend my Labours, than by dedicating them to a Name to which the Clergy are so much indebted. Then

Sir, since You were pleas'd to Honour with a favourable Acceptance, my first Essays in Divinity, I beg leave to dedicate this (perhaps the last) where I have long since dedicated my self, to You; whose Station gives You the first Place in an Address of this kind; and Your own Personal Qualifications and Services, both to Your Country and Your Friends, the next. Your remarkable Zeal for the House of Hanover, was not that alone which rendered You a proper Person to be King GEORGE's first Sheriff in this great and miserably-distracted County, and at the Time of Electing a New Parliament; Your near Alliance with many of the chief Nobility, and I

tere

DEDICATION.

Interest in more, with what You had
before done to oppose the Pretender,
might have saved You the Expence
and Trouble of this Office; which, for
the sake of the Protestant Interest, and
in Gratitude to a Noble Lord, (which
ought to put me in mind of that I owe
to You) You were pleas'd to sustain;
the good Temper in which the County
was kept; the Satisfaction express'd
by the Candidates of all sides; and yet
a general Success on that, which we
had reason to think the Right Side, is
but one Specimen of those Talents
which distinguish You. If Fame were
the Thing You desir'd, Your own Me-
rits, but displaying themselves, must
soon set it above the reach of Envy
and Detraction. But I shou'd not take
so much Pleasure in courting You, be-
cause a Great Person, as I do in admi-
ring

DEDICATION.

ring You, because a Publick Good; as
Gentleman of polite Literature, of
most unbiass'd and resolute Integrity
as a sincere and active Friend. If
had not convers'd with Your Candour
I should, as an Author, fly from You
and give the best Proof of my
Judgment by being afraid of Your
But you, Sir, who can as easily pardon
Faults as you can discern them
will accept an honest Intention, and
for the sake of the Subject overlook
the Performance. And so, amidst
many great Discouragements from
appearing in Print, and especially at
this time, I have found out one greater
Pleasure; which is an Opportunity
to declare my self

Your most Oblig'd and
Grateful Humble Servant

R. COLLINS

Things to be contended for about it: and how



incedding Christians, whose zeal would fill the

ROM. XIV. 19.

Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace.

undergone as many Changes and Alterations

ALSE Pretences to Religion, and Mistakes about the Nature of it,

have made Religion it self suspected by some as the Cause of those Disorders in the World it was design'd on purpose to prevent. The Author of

Text therefore, being (as became a good Apostle) under a more than ordinary Concern, for the Reputation and Success of Christianity, (which is the highest Improvement of Religion;) takes occasion from the fierce Contests of the Jew and Gentile Converts, about Ceremonies and Rites, Meats and Drinks, and the Observation of Days, and the Mischiefs ensuing thereupon; to shew them, where True Religion do's consist; what are the chief

B

Things

Things to be contended for about it; and how they should so behave themselves as to be acceptable to God, and approved of Men. And by strict Observance of the Rules here prescrib'd, the Veil of Imposture would be taken off, the False Prophets expos'd, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* detected; together with the abominable Frauds of succeeding Craftsmen, whose Zeal would still increase with the Depravity of their Manners; and the less they had of the Substance or Reality, the more they would covet of the Shadow, or Appearance of Godliness: For so commanding Power has Religion over Reason and Conscience that it has ever been found the most politick Pretence for all worldly Designs; and has therefore undergone as many Changes and Alterations, been shewn in all the Variety of Form, and Shape, and Dress, that the Wisdom of the Children of the World could contrive. That Bodies of the finest Texture, are soonest subject to decay; and that the Corruption of the best Things is the worst, may well be apply'd to Religion, when we consider, how quickly, how lamentably, and how otherwise, unaccountably, the Worship of the True God of *Israel*, dwindled into Idolatry and Superstition; and how hard and difficult, nay how impossible it was to bring the *Jews* to the most plain and just and reasonable Precept of serving him and him alone. What the Worship of one God was to the *Jews*, that Peace, and Love, and Unity is to the *Christians*, the distinguishing Mark, or Badge, or Character of their Religion. *Hereby*

An Assize-Sermon.

3

all Men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another. And yet how few are there of those who call themselves Christians, that can be brought to renew their Christianity by their Love? There was Time, when Believers in Word, were likewise in Deed; before the worldly Designs, and other Wickedness of Man had perverted his Way; before the rank and noisome Weeds of Pride and Ambition, and false Gain grew up to choke the Word, flourish'd in the beautiful fragrant Blossoms of Charity and Love, and brought forth the most delightful Fruit of Peace. In the Golden Age of primitive Christianity, the Love of Christians was so conspicuous, that it became into a Proverb, *See how the Christians love one another!* But now, must I mention so sad a Truth; the more it shocks and upbraids, the more it may affect us; and put us upon endeavouring to alter a State so truly deplorable; As we are very much fall'n off from the Design, and from the Purity of the Gospel, we have inverted, as much as in us lies, the very Character of our Discipleship; and so behav'd our selves of late, as if our Saviour had positively commanded us to *hate one another*. What he foresaw would be the Event of his Coming; and foreseeing, bewail'd it, as the Consequence of degenerate and corrupt Nature; *Think not that I am come to bring peace on Earth; I tell you nay, but rather divisions*; That different Pretences to Religion would separate the nearest Relations; and like a sharp and two-edg'd Sword, cut asunder all Natural and Civil Ties and Obligations; We have seem'd

to interpret as a natural necessary Consequence of his Doctrine, as the very Design of his Coming whilst by their Practices too many amongst us oppose Peace, and promote Divisions. For beside the numerous Sects, and Parties, and Opinions which at this Day divide, weaken, and oppose the True Church of Christ; a strange Evil Spirit of Jealousy, and Discontent, of Noise, and Faction, and Discord, and violent Opposition, has possessed us. It came in a terrible Whirlwind, so can have no relation to God, who was in the still small Voice; nor to his gentle peaceable Son, our Saviour, who came down like Rain into a Fleece of Wool; but must be the natural Off-spring of the Common Enemy of our Peace; that roaring Lion *who walks about, seeking whom he may devour*. Yet this *Black Imp*, as grim, and as destructive as he is, has been entertain'd; his Entertainment appears, in the Success of his Work, to the great Reproach of our most Holy Profession, to the great Grief of all Peaceable, Quiet, Honest, and Good Men, to the great Joy of both the publick and private Enemies of our Zion; much to the Prejudice of the Church, and with no less Danger to the State.

Being therefore deeply affected my self with dismal Apprehensions from our unhappy Divisions being call'd upon in this publick Manner, to say something that may be agreeable to the Design of this great Appearance in the House of God, of the Judges, the Magistrates, Rulers and Governors of the Land; by him deputed as his Ministers of Justice

ce; by him ordain'd to execute the Laws, and keep Peace and Order among Men; Considering that, how much these Heats and Animosities, serve a Turn, have lately been reviv'd, by malicious Discourses from the Pulpit, and seditious Libels from the Press; by Badges of Distinction, and Characters of Reproach; and by a never before attempted *Mockery of the Church of England*, the just Abhorrence of all sober Church-men; Obedience to the Commands of our Sovereign, and of that greater King the Prince of Peace, whose Ministers are styled *the Ambassadors of Peace*, and whose Employment it is, to reconcile Men to God, and to one another; to do all they can for promoting the Good and Happiness of Mankind in this World, as well as that which is to come: I thought, that, upon all these Accounts, I could not better discharge the Duty of a Subject, a Christian, a Clergyman, than by recommending Love, and Peace, and Unity, after the Example of *St. Paul*; and especially at this Time, and in this Place, *Let us therefore follow after the things that make for Peace.*

The better to bespeak your Attention and Candour, considering how much my Subject deserves One, and how much I my self shall want the other: Before I proceed to the Common Method of dividing the Text, I beg leave from the Word *therefore*, to observe, that it is the Conclusion of many strong, and powerful Arguments, joyn'd to the most exact and lively Description of Religion, drawn from the Nature of God, and suited to the State

State and Condition of Man, in order to prepare him for the Reception of a Doctrine so hard to be reconcil'd to Flesh and Blood. He who ow'd his own Conversion from a fierce and fiery persecuting Zeal, to an over-powering Light, and to a Voice from Heaven, was, no doubt, experimentally aware how difficult a Task it must needs be, for one Man to persuade another, before he is truly Religious to become truly Peaceable; to encounter against Prejudice and Error, against a quite mistaken Notion of Things; against a false, deluded, obstinate Conscience; to engage with any Prospect of Success, all his fierce Passions, his violent Lusts that war in his Members: And, if it was so difficult for an Apostle, chosen, selected of God, instructed by the miraculous Operations of his Spirit, assisted by the Power of working Miracles; to make Men many of whom notwithstanding call'd themselves Christians, *follow after the things that make for peace*: Nay more, if it was not only hard and difficult for St. Paul, but utterly impossible for all the Apostles, to keep the outrageous World in order, when they were all inspir'd by God, and sent by him, about the World for that purpose and had all the same Gifts, and the same Power and all unanimously agreed in the same noble Design: Then, who of us, can be sufficient for these Things, without those Helps, and those Advantages, and without that Concord and Unanimity which ought to be amongst us? When some are sounding an Alarm, and beating the Drum of War whilst others obeying the Commands of a mee-

merciful Saviour, are employ'd in proclaiming
peace. However, if the Difficulties were much
greater than they are, we must not give way, but
rather exert our selves in the Methods of a true
Christian Zeal, govern'd by Reason and Discretion;
and which will soon, by having more Light than
heat, distinguish it self from the opposite Zeal,
which has abundance of Heat, and very little Light;
we are not only bound to pray for a Reconcilia-
tion of our Differences, but to do all that is in our
power towards the Reconciling of them. For the
more effectual promoting of this End, I shall,

First, Recommend the Duty of Peace in general,
from Reason, from Scripture, from the Nature and
Intrivance of our Religion, from the Design of
civil Government: And then,

Secondly, Press it in such particular Instances,
as are most suitable to these Times.

Now, to prevent that Obscurity, which too often
obscures Truth, and is caus'd by not explaining the
Terms in our Discourse; I shall here consider
peace, as is proper to my Design, under the No-
tion of Love and Charity. Thus it stands oppos'd
to Strife and Contention; and I shall shew the
Unreasonableness of it to Reason.

Suppose then that one of us, who it may be now
least concern'd about this Duty: Suppose, I say,
that one of us had been alive upon the Earth, in
the Infancy of the World, when Men were taught
only

only by the Dictates of Nature, and the Common Notions of Good and Evil; when, to be sure, the Heathens had different Aims and Interests, for which they plotted and design'd, struggled and contended, as we now do: Would he not have found himself nearly concern'd, to baffle all Attempts either upon his Person or his Property? Would he not have cast in his Thoughts the most probable Means for his own Security and Quiet? And tho' he should fail of Success, from Force, or Art, or Stratagem, would he not still persist in the same Desire of Safety and Peace, when by such Experiments, and such a feeling of his State, he has gone a great Way towards obtaining the Things he so necessarily desires? For by what is so very grateful, and pleasing to him, he can tell how to gratify and please others. he would have no Man injure or disturb him, he would immediately, if his Thoughts were just, take up a firm Resolution, not to injure or disturb another. And would not this Practice of Love and Charity, and the doing of good Turns, be a lively powerful Precept to work upon the same Common Human Nature, and in Time be alone sufficient to prevent Injuries and Affronts from even Heathen Men; who having not a Law, must be a Law unto themselves. Reason convinces the strongest Man, that he is weak, and not able to support himself: Wisdom, and Greatness, and Riches are a Defence; but not alone sufficient to defend for Man is a dependant Being; dependant, in many Respects, upon his Fellow-Creatures; which is

wise Designation of Providence, that no body may be thought so Useless and Contemprible, as not upon some Account or other to be able to serve, or to oblige; and so may have a Natural Right to be oblig'd and served by those who are never so much greater than he. And they who are of a quiet and peaceable Temper, who study to be Mild and Meek, Good-natur'd and Obliging, do generally find great Advantages, by a Return of these good Qualities to themselves. If it be reasonable for a Creature to love the Image of his Creator; for a Man to love his own Brother, nay, if it be reasonable for a Son to love his Father that begot him; then in the Image of God created he is all; who likewise commanded us to love as Brethren: We are begotten of God, but we cannot love God for all that, unless we love our Brother also.

This Duty extends to all the good Offices we are in a Capacity to do: But as it is not my proper Business now to consider it in that Latitude; so I shall only observe, that if it be of so large an extent, then certainly it must take in every Instance of Love and Charity, as contributing to peace; which I am now to recommend from Scripture.

It seems the *Jews*, who were always a blind and stubborn People, were much in the dark to the Duty of my Text; their Notions of Charity were narrow, and confin'd chiefly to their own Sect, to their own private Interest, and to their own perverse Humour; they profess'd Love,

but it was only for those that lov'd them. Now this was a mean mercenary Love; it was indeed only a Love of themselves, so could justly merit nothing: They taught to hate an Enemy, which is a most certain Way to reduce the Number of one's Friends; and is as impolitick, as it is mischievous. And instead of pardoning Injuries, they return'd them; so were self-condemn'd. An Eye for an Eye was the Measure of their Charity. But what should a Man do in this Case, were he to contest with one that could over-power him? It was a Maxim in the Jewish Politicks, That whosoever was not with them, was against them; and that whosoever was against them, was against God. No Wonder that Men of such Principles, should be profess'd Enemies to Moderation, and resolve not to do, what they prophanelly call'd, the Word of the Lord, negligently; no doubt, the ignorant People were led on by a blind Zeal; but the leading Party amongst them, thought of serving themselves more than God; and to drive on their own private Designs, under the fair and colourable Pretence of Religion; their Cry was the Synagogue but their Aim the State: And for their Interest there, Christ himself must be accused as an Enemy to *Cæsar*; St. Paul, as a Mover of Sedition; tho' the Falsity of those Calumnies plainly appears from their Doctrine, and from their Practice of Submission to Governors. But yet *Moses* taught better Things, and Things that more belong to Peace. *To do as they would be done by: To love their Neighbour as themselves. Thou shalt not avenge,*

Now bear any grudge against the Children of thy People, is an exprefs Precept. But as the Jews are feverely reprimanded and confuted by our Saviour Christ, for their proneness to Quarrel and Contend, to Perfecute and Revile; so Love, and Charity, and Peace, are with a peculiar Elegance and Emphasis recommended in his Gospel: *Let love be without dissimulation; Be kindly affectioned one towards another: Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not: Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep; be of the same mind one towards another: Mind not high things, but condescend to Men of low estate: Be not wise in your own conceits: Recompeuce to no man evil for evil: Provide things honest in the sight of all Men: If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all Men.* Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves, but rather give place unto wrath: For it is written, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord: Be not overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good: For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from Evil, and his lips that they speak no Guile: Let him eschew Evil, and do Good; let him seek Peace, and ensue it.* Which is much the same with my Text, *Follow after the things that make for peace.*

From hence it will appear, that the Design of Christianity, was the greatest Improvement of Morality: *Christ came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it; To bring in and establish that Righteousness, which the Jewish Religion aim'd at; but through the Weakness of that Dispensation, was*

not able to accomplish: He came not to take away the least Part of Religion, but to distinguish Substance from Shadow; Truth from Falshood; and to shew what was, and what was not Religion; in order to put an End to those Feuds and Contests about Things of no real Worth in themselves; and therefore of no Consideration, when put in Competition with Love, and Charity, and Peace, which are the *fulfilling of the Law*, the End of the Commandment; greater than Knowledge, Faith, and Hope, and of everlasting Efficacy. Charity never fails. And therefore we must place Natural and Moral Duties first in our Esteem: God himself has distinguish'd them from all instituted Religion. These are the Laws which first he gave, and he wrote them with his own Finger in Tables of Stone. And of all Moral Duties, this of the Text may justly claim the Precedence, because it makes us most like to God; it is the nearest Imitation of the most perfect and complete Pattern that ever was, who will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice; who, when we were Enemies to him, loved us at such a stupendious Rate, as to lay down his Life for us; Who address'd himself in these affecting Words, *My peace I give unto you, my peace I leave with you*; Only remember, that *as I have loved you, so ye also love one another*. How then can they justify themselves, who, by Pretence of advancing Religion, break through all Obligations, of Nature, of Civil Society, and disturb the Peace and Happiness of Mankind. Is it possible for Men, doing thus wickedly, to know what Manner of Spirit they

are of? No; Father forgive them, for they
 are blinded, their Hearts are hard'ned, and
 know not what they do: But we too sadly
 from what Religion these dismal Effects of
 Air and Discontent must proceed; by the cruel
 rines of extirpating Hereticks, and deposing
 and absolving Subjects from their Allegi-
 to them; by their Ecclesiastical Anathema's,
 as they are pleas'd to stile them, wholesome
 rities; with which they mock the King of
 ven, and so well may dare all the Powers up-
 earth. But is it possible to conceive with what
 ences, either from Scripture or Reason, the Sons
 violence can proceed with so much Barbarity
 they do, against those who differ from
 never so little in Matters of Religion? When
 for whose sake they would be thought so ze-
 order'd that the Tares should not be pluck'd
 the Wheat till the Time of Harvest; who
 d the Fire from Heaven, which was call'd
 to consume the Samaritans; who, when some
 his own Disciples went back, forsook, and
 d walk no longer with him; did thus gently
 stulate with them, *Will ye also go away?* Who
 ed the first Preachers of his Gospel, not to do
 least Injury, but to bear the greatest; to be
 Lambs among Wolves, in Meekness to instruct
 that oppose themselves. And as Violence
 Oppression are by no means to be reconcil'd
 Christianity; so are they no less contrary to
 n and Prudence; for they exasperate and
 dice, but they can never persuade; the best
 way

way to persuade a Man, is to use him kindly; convince him first that we love him, then he will believe that we advise him for his Good; that we seek not his, but him; If we Intreat him in the Name and Methods of Jesus Christ, he will of course conclude, that it is for the sake of Jesus Christ, as well as for his own sake, that we do so treat him: But he who does all he can to ruin a Man in this World, gives him poor Encouragement to expect that he should be sincerely concerned to save him in the other. Besides, the Understanding may be convinc'd, but it can never be subdu'd by any external Power. So then, if we would subdue it to the Obedience of Christ, our Weapons must not be Carnal, but Spiritual: Nor, in the last place, do's a mild, charitable Disposition intend to promote the Interest of Christianity, but it do's to support the Civil Government.

Shall I need to observe how nearly we are concern'd to support that Government under which we live, and by which we are protected. It is not highly reasonable for us to do all we can, that may contribute to the Safety and Well-being of that, by which our own Peace and Safety are serv'd, on which our Religion, our Persons, our Property do entirely depend: *Pray for the peace of the City,* says the Prophet; *for in the peace of the City shall ye have peace.* The Children of this generation, for the most part, are more than the Children of light. But in this particular of consulting the publick Safety, they seem to have forfeited all Pretences to Wisdom: For

not labour to cross all the Methods and Designs of a wise and good Government; as if they were resolved to defeat the Purposes of Providence to the Common Safety, and bring sore Ruin upon themselves, their Children, and their Children's Children? Whilst some have been hewing down Foundations, others have struck at her very Head. I dare not, I need not, to say that of them which they have publish'd of themselves. We have in many Respects been an unthankful People, and scorn'd the Means of our Deliverance: But so grant an Instance of the most unreasonable Manner and Ingratitude, considering either the Means, or the Greatness of the last Deliverance, sure there never was before. Can we affirm that all Government is from God? That every Soul must be subject to the higher Powers? Which are Truths so certain and undeniable; and yet disturb the State, and despise our Rulers? Is Truth, or Party, the Rule of Duty? Or, does that which is true in one Reign, become false Doctrine in another? We have as Great, as Wise, and as Good a King, as ever sat upon the Throne; endow'd with all those Qualifications, which can be necessary to make himself beloved, and his People happy, and with true Disposition to exert them. This we may only see, from what he has already done, and from what he declares his Resolution to pursue: We are in as good Hands, as it is possible for us to be; and unless by our own Feuds and Animosities, or our fretful and querulous Humour, we defeat the

the wisest Counsels, all is like to continue well with us. Which brings me to the Second Thing I proposed, to press the Duty *following after peace*, in such particular Instances as are most suitable to these Times.

First then, Let it be our great Concern to come sincerely, and heartily Religious. And I would recommend Religion to introduce Peace and Unity, so I would propose Purity of Intention as the only Means to let in True Religion. Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, peaceable; the Impure can have no Peace with, and therefore they will suffer no Peace without Purity of Intention, I would be understood to mean, a Mind untainted with Error and Prejudice, a Soul hungering and thirsting after Righteousness, having no Inclination to gratify, in opposition to a known Law, but desiring a Law or Rule to regulate Inclination and Desire: Such a sincere Piety and Simplicity of Temper and Disposition, as was in good Old *Jacob*, who had the Character of a plain and sincere Man, in opposition to his Brother *Esau*, who is said to be a cunning or a crafty Man; one who has no Designs from this World but what are honest and fair; no private Interest to carry on at the Charge of the Publick; who can appeal to God for his Integrity. Such were the Apostles, whom our Lord found readiest to embrace his Gospel, and therefore fittest to be trusted with the Dispensation of it. A Man that is thus disposed to entertain Religion, is best qualified

understand it ; and the right Understanding of Religion will go a great Way towards curing that quarrellsome, that dividing Humour, which we have so much Cause to lament. I would not, whilst I am recommending Charity, say any thing that might appear uncharitable ; but it is a very shrewd Symptom, that there is more Religion in the Head, than in the Heart ; that there is something else at the Bottom, when those who distinguish themselves, by making a great Noise about the Church, seldom frequent *our* Churches, or *our* Altars. She was not the true Mother of the Child who consented to divide it. We have great Reason to Glory in the Excellent Constitution of the Establishment'd Church ; and we do Conform, as strictly as possible, to all its Laws ; we omit no part of the Liturgy ; we read every Prayer, as constantly, as distinctly, and as devoutly as we can ; we preach, from the deepest Thoughts of our Hearts, upon the Purity and Soundness of its Doctrine, upon the Decency and Lawfulness of its Ceremonies ; we respect, we reverence, we obey our Bishops ; but we dare not make this our Glorifying void, by advancing such Doctrines as are not to be found in the New Testament, nor in the first Ages of Primitive Christianity, as some of our mistaken Brethren have but lately done : We cannot have the Boldness to affirm, that the Sacrament is an expiatory Sacrifice ; That secret Confession and Absolution are necessary ; That the Church has Authority to act Independantly on the Civil Powers. We are aware how many great Corruptions have
D arisen

arisen from these false Principles; We know them to be the Foundation of Popery, and therefore justly condemn'd by all the Principles of the Reformation: We believe the Church of *England* to come the nearest to the Primitive Pattern, and to be most like the True Church of Christ, of any in all the World; and we would fain have her always shine bright in this Illustrious Character. Seeing these Things are so, if we did not strive to promote her true Interest, we should be *false Brethren* indeed. We use all the *Arguments* we can think of; would you have us do any more, to persuade our Brethern without, to come into her Communion? We compel them, in the Sense of the Gospel; that is, we press them hard, with the most powerful Reasons for so doing. We advise them to consider well the Nature and Consequence of a Separation; we shew them, that nothing but a firm Persuasion of Conscience can justify it: But then if they do separate upon the account of Conscience; and who shall pretend to determine that? (To know another's Heart, who so little knows his own:) What Course have we to take? We have gone to the Length of our Commission. And as to the Constitution of the Civil Government under which we live, by that we regulate our Loyalty, obeying our Prince, according to the Laws, which give him all the Power that a good Prince can desire, and his People the utmost Assurances of Security; cheerfully contributing to the Necessities and Demands of the State; encouraging and persuading, where-ever we can, to a duti-

a dutiful Subjection, and a peaceable Behaviour. These are the Principles, and have been the Practices, so far as I am capable to make any Observation, of those whom they call the *Low-Churchmen*: And because I have been rank'd amongst such as now bear that Character, I think myself bound to declare them.

And now, when we have done all these things; and if we knew them, are still ready to do more for the Security, Honour, and Peace, of both the Church and State; Is it not unreasonable to condemn us for not doing that, which if we did it, would subject us to the highest Displeasure of our God, and make us justly abhorr'd by our Country? 'Tis a part of Justice to the Subject I am upon, to set these Things in a true Light, because they are the main Pretence for the Differences now on Foot amongst us. All Occasions of Strife and Contention are to be avoided by Christians; but Strifes under the Colour of Religion, are always the worst; because they not only seem to warrant a greater Eagerness, but they assign that as the Cause of Disagreeing, which was design'd to make us agree. These Differences have not a little been exasperated by the too great Licentiousness of the Press; an Evil long complain'd of, but, it seems, very difficult to cure: Yet the Difficulties of curing it are certainly less, than the Mischiefs it derives upon the Publick. 'Tis much better to prevent Stains and Blots, as well as much easier, than to take them out. An honest Man would chuse any, the meanest Way, of living, rather

ther than thrive and grow rich by Defamation and Scandal: He would not be guilty of perverting Truth, to serve any Cause whatsoever. He would not do Evil, that Good might come of it; much less would he do Evil, for the sake of promoting Evil. But the Wicked, Impudent Scribblers of this Age, who so much disturb the publick Quiet, have cast off all the Principles of Common Honesty, and sell their Consciences, as *Judas* did his Saviour, for a paltry Reward; they are got into the Condition of the unjust Steward; they cannot dig, to beg they are ashamed. But there are others who cannot pretend to any such Temptation as this, and who, upon many other Accounts, have less to plead for their Excuse; I mean such as out of a meer Ostentation of Learning, strike at the very Foundation of Reveald Religion: Yet they shew themselves at last to be unskilful Artists, meer Bunglers at their Work; for they can only pull down and destroy, they can build up nothing in the Room of what they pull down; they produce not any one constituent Scheme of Things; they raise Objections to amuse, but they give no solid and substantial Answers, either to strengthen or to settle us. After so many Hundred Years, as Christianity hath been profess'd and practis'd amongst us, is it not surprizingly strange to see a Set of vain Philosophers, proudly trampling upon the Judgment of the Best, the Wisest, and the most Learned Men of Generation after Generation; Quarrelling with, and Disputing the very Articles of our Faith? I speak with the greater

after Freedom upon this Occasion, to avoid the
putation of Partiality, to shew that they have
s'd a false Report, who represent the moderate
Party as Favourers of such Sort of People.
There are some bad Men of all Denominations,
and it would be very hard to charge their Faults
on the rest; There are some in every Opinion,
who, in the Variety of Things, have false as well
as true Notions. But would it not be unreasona-
ble to affirm, that because we agree in our Sentiments
where their Notions are right; therefore, we
must also agree with them where they are
wrong? It would very much conduce to the
publick Peace, if the Theories of Religion and Go-
vernment were less consider'd, and the Practice
more; If People would not be meddling out of
their proper Sphere, nor beyond the reach of their
capacities; If they would study to express them-
selves clearly and freely, and openly communicate
their Thoughts, this would much contribute to
our Peace and Unanimity: For I am verily per-
suaded, that most of our Controversies are kept on
foot, for want of rightly understanding one ano-
ther's Minds. And then if we could be brought
to forbear, (tho' it is become so much in fashion)
the low, the mean, the unmanly Arts, of joyning
Characters to Party-Opinions; representing Men
good or Bad, just as they happen to be for, or a-
gainst us; exposing their Persons to discredit their
Opinions, and saying many Times all manner of
Evil against them falsely for Party's sake; This is
a certain Sign of a baffled and desperate Cause;
and

and is no less impertinent, and ridiculous, than rude and uncivil. Besides the complicated and Mischief of this Sin, both with respect to selves and others, which I have not now Time to lay before you; it is an Affront to Society, contrary to Charity, and upon all Accounts to be abhorr'd.

Thus have I, as briefly as I could, explained, recommended, and apply'd, the Duty of following after Peace; and I think I have done it in such manner, as not to give just Offence to any. However, where the Christian Religion, and the publick Peace, are so nearly concern'd; we must for the sake of a general Applause, (if the Nature of such Discourses would allow of that) by striving to please Men, run the desperate Hazard of displeasing God.

And now I shall conclude, with exhorting all to keep the Unity of the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and in Righteousness of Life. But, I particularly Address my self to those who are so nearly concern'd to preserve the publick Peace: it is for this very End that Magistrates are appointed by God; and they have great Helps and Advantages afforded them, and so are doubly engaged both by Duty and Interest to answer the End of their Institution. The Authors and Dispersers of Lies and Scandal, are become intolerable; By that wicked Spirit has been rais'd, which in defiance of the Law, of Reason, and Justice, rages furiously, and is violent. Whatever our Differences may be, as to less concerning Matters, methinks

we should all agree, speedily to suppress Fury, I
threatens not this or that particular Party, I
than it strikes at all Government. No Coun- I
in boast of better Laws, than are provided for I
safety and Peace of this Kingdom; but our
ness in this particular can never be felt, till
vigilance and Skill of good Magistrates, shall
those good Laws into Execution. We have
Reason to hope for such a lasting Settlement
airs for the future, by the bringing to light
that are past; and shewing the Nation her
friends; from a Parliament zealously devoted
Service of their King and Country; and
a King, who has nothing so much at Heart as
good of all his People. Such, in spite of
rue Malice of our Enemies, is our present
Case; and may it long continue to be,
now it is; may none of our Adversaries be
to break off that Mutual Confidence, on
the Nation's Hope and Strength so much
ed. God has given us a Prince of that
ency and Goodness, as render Him his true
sentative upon Earth: And let us sincerely
that he will confirm and strengthen Him in
oodness; That he will *continue* to make Him
in betwixt Good and Evil; that his Reign may
ng and prosperous, and his own Royal Fa-
may adorn this Throne for ever. That as we
Him now do, so under them the Generati-
come may enjoy the True Religion; have
Rights, Liberties, and Persons, guarded, pro-
and defended, and lead quiet and peaceable
Lives

Lives in all Godliness and Honesty;
 glorious View, my Brethren, be of good
 be of one Mind: live in Peace, and
 Love and Peace shall be with you.

F I N I S.

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